

Sweet out? ✓

Contract of championship lacrosse coach not renewed

BY DAVE PALANA CLIPPER STAFF
SPORTS@CLIPPERPRESS.COM

When the Dragons go for their seventh straight boys lacrosse championship next spring, head coach Chris Sweet may not be pacing the sidelines.

School Committee members George Cipolletti and John Heinstadt confirmed Monday that school Superintendent Sue Skeiber informed the board that Sweet's contract would not be renewed for next year.

Sweet just completed his fourteenth year with the lacrosse program, which has won seven of the last eight Division I state championships.

Neither school committee member said they knew any information regarding the reason for Sweet's dismissal. Skeiber and Assistant Superintendent



Chris Sweet

Ed Walsh were both on vacation and could not be reached for comment.

The news came as a surprise to Sweet, who said he had his annual coaching evaluation with athletic director Thom Holdgate and principal Andrew Stephens without any indication his tenure was up.

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"There had been no assertion of any misconduct," Sweet said Monday afternoon. "It was an excellent review and had no reference to anything like that."

Holdgate confirmed that no allegations of misconduct were made against Sweet in the evaluation, but said he could not comment about what was said or why Sweet's contract was not renewed.

He added that his working relationship with Sweet as athletic director was always professional.

"I thought [our working relationship] was fine," Holdgate said. "The man knows how to coach."

Stephens also said he could not comment on the nature of the evaluation or the decision to let Sweet go, saying it was a matter for the superintendent's office.

"One of the things I cannot do is comment on any type of personnel matter whether it is a coach or a teacher," he said. "I consider it a real ethical issue on my part."

Sweet said he has not

sports has to deal with a bunch of personnel issues and that can lead to hurt feelings," he said. "There are always issues about playing time and things like that at every level. To say anything more specific would be inappropriate."

Bob Cully and Charlie Harvey, presidents of the Lacrosse Boosters, could not be reached for comment.

Several former players and parents of lacrosse players under Sweet's tenure greeted the news of his departure with shock.

"I never in a million years though it would happen," said Max Quinzani, who played on the 2004, 2005 and 2006 state championship teams and currently plays for Duke University. "I loved him as a coach and we did nothing but win for him."

Marybeth Nixon, whose son Chris currently plays for Georgetown University,

wasn't even fully funded by the school. Daniels, who went on to play for the New Jersey Pride and Boston Cannons of Major League Lacrosse after graduating from Dartmouth, said Sweet was "instrumental" in getting him into a Division I

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— Coach Chris Sweet



school and credited the coach with building Duxbury into one of the top programs in the country.

"When I was a senior, no one knew where Duxbury was," he said. "And now colleges recruit out of Duxbury and it's a nationally known program. As an alumnus, I'm very proud of the program's success and a lot of that has to do with Coach Sweet."

Sweet is still holding out hope that his contract will still be renewed at some point and said he has not considered alternatives to coaching at Duxbury.

"I love coaching and, until the school indicates to me formally I won't be back, I still hope to be coaching at Duxbury," he said. "I love my job coaching at Duxbury and I believe the program is a model of how to tie in academics and athletics."

If Duxbury chooses to go in another direction, Holdgate said he would be in charge of the preliminary interviews and said he hopes to have a coach in place by the school's annual coaching meeting in late October.

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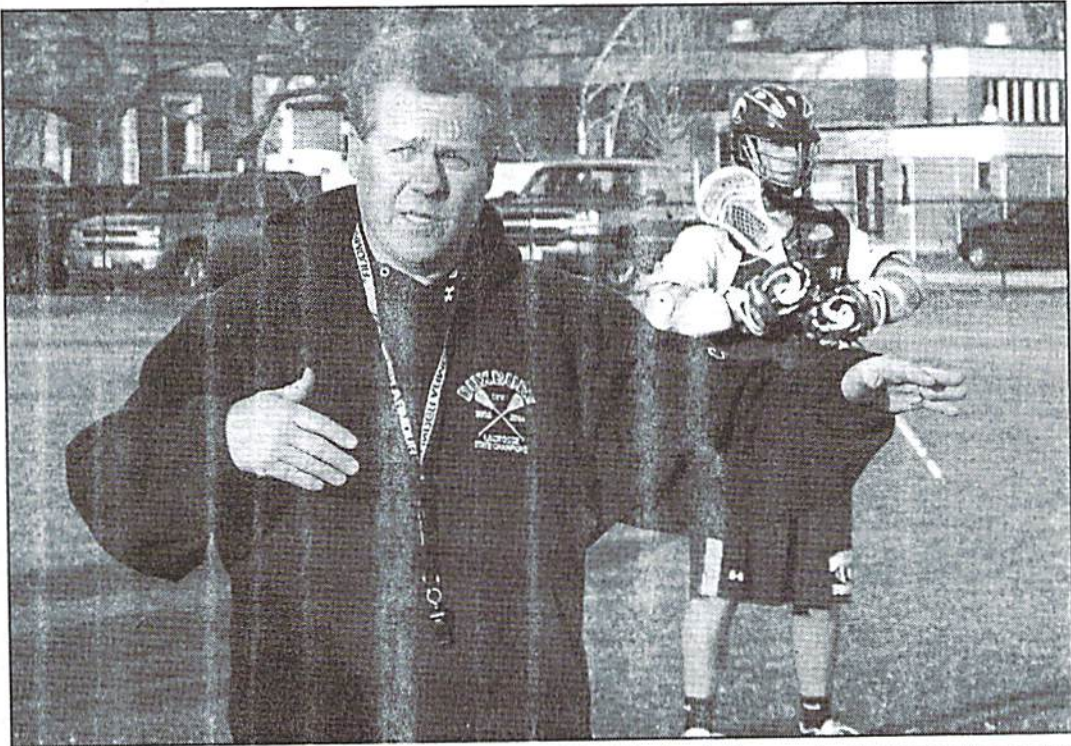
received any formal indication from the Duxbury Public Schools that his contract will not be renewed and said he does not know why they chose to let him go. When asked if there had been any issue with parents or members of the Lacrosse Boosters that may have contributed to the school's decision, Sweet said he would not get into specifics.

"Any coach at any level of

echoed Quinzani's statements and credited Sweet for her son's success in lacrosse.

"I do not think he would be playing Division I lacrosse right now if it was not for Chris Sweet," she said. "He's a good man and a good coach."

While Quinzani and Chris Nixon enjoyed a string of championships under Sweet, Tom Daniels, who was captain of the 2000 Dragon team, remembers when the program



Duxbury Lacrosse Coach Chris Sweet has won seven state titles in eight years, but he won't get a chance for an eighth. After 14 years on the job, Sweet's contract was not renewed this year.